

## **Amhara a willow-o-the-wisp: ደቂ ኢድርትና፡a friar's lantern!**

in the middle of the night, it is possible to see in the most inaccessible coppiced with foliage a hillside or on a top of a mountain. The flickering light now on, now off, displayed, making one wonder whether the fairies are having fun around a campfire; otherwise who in his right mind would sit in such a place around a campfire, exposing themselves to jackals and hyenas, and asking for trouble at the time of a night!

No sooner do you turn round, the flame is extinguished or has moved to other place. Now you see a flame, now you do not. Hard to believe, it appears a flame-game the fairies are having fun playing with. I say fairies, because we were told by elders.

The Amhara elite too are like the frairs' lantern. Now you see them, now you don't. Now they are here, everywhere, now they are nowhere. They think the entire Wollo, Shewa, Gojjam, Begemeder, Raya, Western Tigray, Metekel, Welega, Harrier is Amhara land and of Amhara people.

But in reality Amharas, if there is such a thing, are a small tribal clan concentrated in the pocket of Shewa called Ankobor, nothing more a stiver.

The rest is a fiction, a friars lantern, designed to help perputate their superiority over other nationalities who are kept tight under their thumb.

The 'friar's lantern' is in fact an ignis fatuus, a spontaneous combustion of gas from decomposed organic material, a flitting phosphorescent light seen at night, chiefly over marshy ground. It is there at once, it isn't there when you turn round.

The Amhara elite's version of their self image is that they are here and everywhere at the same time. That is one thing and the other like a fairy they project themselves and represent all people who live in the wider surrounds. But they have monopolised and controlled the state apparatus so only their version of history is written and told to subliminally manage to

unfortunately gaslight a portion of the population to doubt its own identity and metastasise to believing they are Amharas indeed.

No other historian or chronicler would dare to write and challenge the Amhara version of demography unless that person were out of his mind. For a start, his research and documentation would not be published and taught in schools and higher institutes. Why then would one want to expose himself only to receive the bitter end of retributions? That was why intellectuals as well as material progress froze in the country for the last 700 years, with nothing to show off to the rest of the world as indeed the Aksumites and the Agew did in prehistoric periods. From the time of Zera-Sion starting 1275 the county saw nothing but plots, war, chaos and destructions. The Amhara leaders mindset is dictated by solipsism, rivalry, internecine and epicaricacy. Nothing to show by way of progress.

In this article I will concentrate only on one aspect. I will leave aside battles, winners and losers and other aspects.

Bear with me and follow the discourse. For lack of time I will focus on the period from 1769 - 1974.

I have already covered the period 1886 -1974 in the previous article: "Royal and Pharonic Pontifications and fabrications laid Bare".

But as a prelude the theme of this article is to prove that no all-round, pure Amhara has ruled Ethiopia as claimed, and we were led to believe.

All Ethiopian kings and emperors in the time period discussed, were either Oromos, half-Oromos with two Tigrayans, namely Emperor Yohannes and Sabagadis of Agame/Irob.

This will demonstrate that the Amhara projection as leaders whom the country couldn't live without was nothing but a deliberate fabrication and fantasy.

And if Oromos or half-Oromos were then leaders and/or king-makers as was the case during the Era of Princes, logic implied they needed to have loyal followers for battles and other footwork the leaders required to maintain their holding on power.

If that were the case, the majority of people in Showa, Wollo, Gojjam and Begemeder, Wekait, Metema, Metekle, Bensangul Gumiz, Welega, etc, the most troubled regions during the era of contest to claim and assert power of the period would have been not exclusively Amharas but mostly Oromos, Tigrians, Benshanguls, Agew, Kemant, Shenashas. No leader, be it a Ras, a prince, a king or an emperor or king maker and buster, could survive and hold power relying on nationalities other than their own.

Now I endeavour to purvey the proofs of who were the Ras, kings and emperors who ruled Ethiopia with their power base in Showa, Wello, Gojjam and Begemeder mostly with slight digression to Tigray at times.

To start of with Menen Lebin Amede was an Oromo who married Alula of Yejjju, governor of Damot. She bore his child in 1819 Ras Ali II. His father Aula of Yejjju, himself to an Oromo who died when son, Ras Ali II was a minor.

Following the death, first Yimam of Yejjju, the child's cousin, in 1828 after defeating Hailemariam Gebre at Walbeba in December 1825 and his subsequent death.

Yimam Gugesa of Yejjju restored the throne to king Gigar who was replaced by Barde Maryam favoured by Hailemariam.

In a twist of fate, Wube Hailemariam joined forces with Yimam against Goshu Birru and Maru of Dembeya and in October 1827 at the battle of Kossober Marue was killed whilst Goshu fled to Gojjam.

In 1828 Yimam died. Yimam showed an inclination to Islam but was buried in the church of Iyasus in Debre Tabor, despite his tendencies.

After the death of Yimam of Yejjju, his brothers Dori and Marye Gugsa, albeit rivals to the throne of Begemeder, fought Sebagadis of Agame at the Battle of Debre Abbay, known as Mai Islami in 14 February 1831. Wube Hailemariam joined the pact despite married to Sebagadis daughter, Dinqinesh in 1830, as well as Sabagadis married Yeweb-dar Hailemariam, Wube's half sister. But Wube was such a monster, all his half brothers.

Merso. Betul and Yeweb-dar had fled Begemeder and sought refuge in Tigray under the auspices of Sabagadis.

To come to point of discussion Sabagadis defeated the pact and Marye was killed. Then Morso was appointed as governor of Begemder.

Dori and Wube came back for another round and but Sebagadis was defeated by the combined forces of the two brothers and Wube Hailemariam.

Tigray fell under Dori and Wube who ravaged and looted Aksum and other places extending to Bahere Negash.

Marye before his death proclaimed himself as Emperor of Ethiopia taking the mantle from his brother Yimam.

All brothers, were all of Oromo descent so was their sister Hirut Gugesa who married Hailemariam Gebre.

Going back in history, Menen Lebin Amede was appointed as a regent in 1831 in placed of her son Ras Ali II who was 12 years old when his father Alula of Yejju died. But once appointed, she became domineering and obsessive with power.

After the death of Ras Kinfu at the Battle of Chenti Ber October 1839, she defeated and captured Kinfu's relative Walda Tekle. Not long afterwards, she deposed Sahle Dengel on 29 August 1840 as an emperor of Ethiopia in favor of her second husband husband (1840 -1842) after divorcing him then remarried him in 1845, again in (1850-1851)Yohannes III.

However, Yohannes offended her son Ras Ali by favoring his rival Wube Haile Maryam. Clearly Yohannes was a textbook an Amhara and favoured Wube as favoured Begemeder governor instead of his son-in-law and his wife's choice. It did not work, the king makers were Oromos and Ras Ali restored Sahle Dengel in October 1841.

Ras Ali II and his mother replaced Gigar as the emperor and put in place Sahle Dengel, even though initially she favoured her husband to the throne

but once she sensed Yohannes III was hand-in-glove with Wube , she sided with Sahle Dengel as emperor in 1832.

Ras Ali II who married Hirut Wube but found himself at loggerheads with Wube and both men fought at the battle of Debre Tabor on 7 February 1847.

Ali had by his side , his uncle Dejzmach Birru Aligaz and Wube's half brother Merrso whilst Wube obtained the support of Birru Goshu of Begemededer.

Both Wube and Birru were eventually defeated but because of the church's hostility towards Ras Ali II as an Oromo and Islamic tendencies of his belief, the church declined to accept Sahle Dengel as emperor, equally for his loose Christian convictions of the emperor to be.

Ras Ali II of Yejju then recalled rusticated Gebre Kistos from Mithara in Lake Tana and appointed him as emperor but unfortunately after three months he died a natural death and Sahle Dengel was reappointed.

Occupation of the imperial throne alternated between Yohannes and Sahle Dengel, Gigar. Gebre Kistos and others before them. The warlords of the time were emperor and king makers as they pleased, The emperors and the seat were games of throne for war lords to play.

Future events were foreshadowed in October, 1846, when Kassa Hailu defeated detachments of Empress Menen's army at two separate battles in Dembiya; at the time, Ras Ali was away in Gojjam attempting to subdue the province's warlord, Birru Goshu, and unable to assist his mother. Kassa defeated the army of Empress Menen the following year on 18 June at Iloha, and took both Menen and her husband the former Emperor Yohannes III captive, forcing Ras Ali to negotiate their release. After three months, in return for making Kassa dejzmach over Dembiya, north of Lake Tana, the Empress and her powerless husband were released. Dejzmach Kassa later reconciled himself to Ras Ali in 1849, and Kassa remained loyal to Ali for the next three years.

However, the relationship between the two eventually deteriorated. Following a series of stunning victories by Kassa, Ali II was decisively defeated by his son-in-law Dejazmach Kassa (who later assumed the throne name of Tewodros II) in the Battle of Ayshal on 29 June 1853, and he lost both the regentship and his territories. At first, Ali fled to safety in a local church, then a few days later fled to the territories of his kinsmen in Wollo province, where he disappeared from history.

In order to have influence, Kassa Menen Amede offered her granddaughter Tewabech Ali as a bride to him. Nevertheless, Kassa came to love her and was faithful to her until her death in 1858.

Kassa, later Tewodros II was born in 1828, his reign lasted from 11 February 1855 – 13 April 1868.

Kassa's parental father was Grebe Georis from Tembien, Tigray and his mother Woizero Atitegeb Wondbewossen was Kemant who was in the local business of selling the traditional herb Kosso ኮሶ, that treats the removal of Tapeworms.

He has another wife blood-related to his first wife Tewabech Ali II who again was granddaughter of Wube.

The second wife of Tewodros was directly the daughter of Wube himself. Her name was Tiruwork Wube. Her mother was Woizero Lakiyaye, the daughter of King Welde Selassie of Tigray. She bore a child from Tewodros named Alemayohu. He was taken to the United Kingdom and taken care by Queen Victoria's household after Tewodros committed suicide, when he thought he wouldn't avoid an humiliating defeat at the hands of Napier.

Upon the death of Tewodros soon she fell ill and died while she was in her way to the United Kingdom as a war prisoner. She was buried Chalacot in Tigray

Much has been said about the Amharas' chastity and purity in their tribal blood, belief and nobility.

A case in point: Wube and his family, Hailemariam Gebre were regarded as nobility from the Semien mountains, governors of Semien province, conquerors of hated Tigray, and Orthodox Christians, my foot!

His mother Mintaye of Jan Amora was a 'side marriage', outside wedlock, if you like a concubine of his father.

But Hailemariam was married to to a Moslem, Hirut Gugsa, the sister of Yimam, Marye, Dori Gugsa, of the Oromo tribe. That means his sons and daughters from Hurit Gugsa were Oromos and Moslems as well from their mother's lineage.

Merso Haile Maryam was the oldest half-brother and early rival of Wube.

Betul Haile Mayan was the second half brother. He was the father of the Taytu Betul future Empress of Ethiopia and wife of Emperor Menelik. Wube was thus an uncle of Taytu.

Yewub-Dar Hailemariam was Wube's older half sister. One of the wives of Sabagadis Wolde: an Irob warlord that ruled Tigray province from 1822 until 1831.

They had one daughter, Yeshimebet Sabagadis, the spouse of Ras Welde Giyorgis Aboye, a cousin of Emperor Menelik II and grandson of Sahle Selassie.

In a plot twist Wube had also married the daughter of Sabagadis named Dinqinesh to reciprocate. in a world women are treated as cattle. This shows Itege Taytu Butel was at least an Oromo by her agnate/father's side.

But it is shocking to learn that the Amhara historians and/or chroniclers failed to mention itage Taytu mother for the record, an important lady in the hearts and minds of the Amhara people, no record of her mother is to found in any website, including Wikipedia. Perhaps fearing that would expose her Oromo lineage by her mother as well as her father. That would be embarrassing for the Amhara elite who pretend she was an Amhara

heroine, some time displayed mounting and saddling a lion, other times a horse galloping tantivy fighting Italians at the Battle of Adewa which again is a fiction. As Taytu was obese, couldn't even walk short distance let alone to mount a tantivy galloping holding with an arrow and shield, the Amhara display with pride! Shame!

Fairs Lantern, the Amhara elite like hootenanny, listening their own voices to gorgonize and gloat over a phantom self-image.

Tekle Giyorgis (1836-21 June 1873). He rule from (11 June 1868 -July 17 1871). He proclaimed his kingship from Soqota as governor of Begemeder. There is no doubt he was an Agew from Lasta. His father's title was Wagshum Gebremedhin of Lasta.

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His mother Princess Ayichesh Tedla Hailu from Begemeder. There is this irony, people who knew well who they were were pretending instead to be someone else. To a certain extent, not only were they fooling themselves, the likes of Tekle Giyorgis, but fooling others. But one would argue you can only fool those who dispose themselves at will to be fooled and be satisfied. As the quote goes, " I am an Amhara, you all are also Amhara, la-di- da, brouhaha cantata, what the heck, we are great!"

His brother Hailu Weldo Kistos who married to Tisseme Darge. Darge's mother Wezero Wurige was Hadiya/Silte.

Father of Hailu, weldo Kiros too was also Wagshum of Lasta.

Tekle Giyorgis II himself married Dinqinshe Marcha, sister Emperor Yohannes of Tigray but all these did not help resolve the bitter fight between the two,

On 11 of July 1871 at the battle of Mereb he was defeated and together with his brother taken prisoner and his mother included in Endaba Girma near Adua, despite he had 60000 strong army against Yohannes's 12000.



There was this exchange of braggadocio between the two. It was told Tekle Giyorgis despatched a sack full sesame, implying the size of his army. Upon receiving the despatch Yohannes returned it the same bag full of roasted sesame grains. And critics argued that was what happened in the end. Finally, to end this article it is the turn of Tekle Haymanot Tessema Gishu Birru, otherwise known Adal Tessema, king of Gojjam.

Finally we come to Tekle Haymanot Tessema of Gojjam otherwise named Adal Tessema. He was king of Gojjam.

He was born in 1847, died on 10 January 1901. He ruled from 20 January 1881 to 10 January 1901.

Tessema Goshu died when he was a minor, so power in Gojjam was transferred to another Amhara warlord, Desta Tedla.

Desta imprisoned Adal but Adal managed to escape and vanished to his Afar parental area where he felt safe. There he regrouped his army and summoned the resources and courage to return to fight and defeated Desta in Gojjam. He then submitted himself to King Tekle Giyorgis who confirmed him as Dejzmach Shum of Gojjam. The king also blessed his sister, Laqeche Gebremedhin as his wife. Thereafter, he attempted to takeover Keffa but was rebuffed and captured by Menelik.

His son, Hailu Tekle Haymanot had a daughter from his wife named, *Woyzero* Askale Mariam. The daughter was Seble Wingel Hailu . She was married to Lij Iyasu Mikel Ali of Wollo, again with Oromo lineage.

She bore him a daughter. She was named Alem Tsahai Iyasu. She was his only one daughter, though renowned to have several wives, including Romane Worke Mengesha Yohannes of Tigray.

Emperor Yohannes intervened demand he be released in exchange Menelik was confirmed as governor of Keffa. The matter was settled.

In January 1887 Tekle Giyorgis attacked the invading army of Mahdists at Metema. One year later

In turn in January 18, 1888 the Mahdists under Abu Anga defeated Tekle Giyorgis at Sar Weha and moved towards Gondor. Many civilians were captured and turned into slaves by the Mahdists.

Yohannes ordered Menelik to march to Gojjam and Gondor. As ordered Menelik moved in. Upon completion of the task he was ordered to move back to Showa, customarily not to instigate another dispute and civil war between Gojjam and Showa.

However, In September 1888 the Mahdists move in again. Tekele Giyorgis now felt the need to side with Menelik as Menelik had demonstrated his resolve and power force. So Tekle Haymanot refused to enforce efforts of Yohannes against the Mahdist who had re-entered western Gojjam. Yohannes suspected Tekle Haymanot and Menelik of plotting against him. To destroy the power of Tekle Haymanot, the army of Yohannes laid waste to much of Gojjam. As a result of the destruction, Tekle Haymanot submitted to Yohannes.

But in the process of clearing the Mahdists and Tekle Giyorgis's forces, Yohannes was shot and killed from a bullet fired from behind, suspected as a plot accomplished by Menelik and Tekle Giyorgis to claim the throne.

Such is the history of the country the Amharas cause and mayhem, believing they have the divine rights to rule the country and compelling others to believing in Amhara identity, an identity that does not exist or if any a minuscule in its contributions. A willow-o-the-wisp, a frairs lantern, a phantom no one can grasp or grip!

Belay Ambelay